

BOOK OF JUDE
Taught by Willis E. Bishop
1990

Scripture and prayer:

"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through Thy precepts I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way. The opening of Your Word gives light. It gives understanding to the simple."

Our heavenly Father, we do thank You that in Your providence, in your wisdom, You have provided for us this Book which we hold in our hands today, in our language, with the privilege of coming together just to read and to study a part of what You've recorded for us.

We thank You that we can depend upon it, not only for direction in this life, but for the certainty of the life to come. We thank You for the challenge of the past few moments to realize that we have a Good Shepherd who through the vicissitudes of life and even through the valley of death will care for us if our faith has been placed wholly in Him. And now, Lord, for these few moments fasten our minds upon the Word of God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Jude 1 - "Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." Or as the Greek has it, "Judas, a bond servant of Jesus Christ."

Who was this fellow, Jude? He definitely was not Judas Iscariot. Then there's a Judas Barabas in Acts chapter 15, and there's no reason to link him with that particular fellow. There is Judas, an apostle, who was one of the twelve disciples of Christ. Most likely he was not Judas, the apostle, and let me tell you why I think that's so.

Look in Jude, verse 17: "But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." He seems to separate himself there from the apostles. If this were Jude, the apostle, he would have said something like, "Remember the words which were spoken by us, the apostles." But he doesn't say that. He seems to separate himself from the apostles, and therefore I don't think this Jude is Jude, the apostle.

The most likely is found in Matthew chapter 13, verse 53: "Now, it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogues, so that they were astonished and said, 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary and His brothers James and Joses [in other words, Joseph], Simon and Judas?'" There we have Judas, or Jude. If that identification is correct, and I believe it to be, it would mean that Jude, the author of the book of Jude, was the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone will say, "Now, wait a minute, Joseph was married previously, and he had some children, and those were these named here in Matthew, and Mary had only one child, and that is Jesus." I really don't think that matches the Scripture. For example, they are always called brothers. Notice, "and His brothers."

Then in verse 56, "and His sisters, are they not all with us?" They are always called brothers and sisters. They are not called cousins. The Greek has a word for cousins. Matthew could have chosen that word if he had so wanted. The Greek has a word for kinsman, or relative, and Matthew could have chosen that word if he had wanted to do that. But he chose the words brothers and sisters.

Incidentally, in verse 56, how many sisters did Christ have, half-sisters? If I were to read, "and His sisters, are they not all with us?" The word "all" would indicate at least how many? Three. If He had one, "would not his sister be with us"? If He had two, would they not say, "are not both of His sisters with us"? But they said, "all His sisters," so we know He had at least three half-sisters.

It is the word sister, not cousin or relative or kinsman, but sisters and brothers. Their relationship is always expressed to Christ and not to Joseph, and they are in most cases with Mary. In Matthew 1, "she brought forth her firstborn son and laid Him in a manger," which indicates that she had other sons. There is no reason to believe that Joseph and Mary did not enter into a perfectly normal wedding relationship after the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. So I think that Matthew 13:55 gives me a good idea that Jude was indeed the half-brother of our Lord. Then, of course, James is mentioned in verse 55, and he becomes the author of the book of James. So, Judas, or Jude, is probably the half-brother of our Lord.

- Q. It is interesting to notice that on the cross Christ committed His mother to John, the disciple, rather than to His brothers. Why did He do that?
- A. Let me tell you why I think He did that. Look at John chapter 7, verse 1: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judea because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, 'Depart from here and go into Judea that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing, for no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.'" [Now the verse I'm after], For even His brothers did not believe in Him."

And so, I rather feel that Christ committed His mother to John, who was a believer and a follower, and His brothers, who did not believe in Him, would not be the best place for her to be.

There are one or two other verses in that connection. Turn to Acts chapter 1, verse 14 - these are the folks in the Upper Room: "These

all continued with one accord in the prayer and in the supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and with His brothers." You will find that between the time of John chapter 7 and apparently after the resurrection of our Lord, they believed in Him, so they were found in the Upper Room with Mary and the others, and would therefore have been fit to minister, among other things, in the name of the Lord afterwards and to be there in the Upper Room with Mary. So I think that's the reason probably that Christ committed His mother to John rather than to His brothers.

Q. Did these half-brothers and half-sisters know about the virgin birth? Did they tell others, or hide it?

A. I don't know that I can answer that exactly. I have an impression. The Scripture says, "Mary kept these things in her heart." I'm not sure that the virgin birth as such was generally spoken about or known. But I can't speak dogmatically. Even the works that the Lord did were supposed to convince them, but they ridiculed Him in John chapter 7. Apparently even the story of the virgin birth would not have convinced them. At least that's my guess.

Q. Would it have been for His own protection?

A. I don't know. There is just not much said about it in Scripture. There is one place where the Jews said, "We be not born of fornication." I don't think they were speaking about Jesus' claims to a virgin birth, but about some other things in the context there. I rather think the virgin birth was a matter just between the Lord and Mary and Joseph.

Q. I have a question about the brothers not believing in Him. There's the book of James, the half-brother of Jesus.

A. Yes, but he didn't write it until after he believed. James and Jude were found in the Upper Room, Acts 1. At that point they believed and then they wrote. In fact, James became an important leader in the early Christian church. I Cor. 15:7 - this is the Lord's appearance after His resurrection - verse 3: "I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas [that would be Peter] and then by the twelve, and after that He was seen by over 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present time, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James."

I am putting two and two together and getting five out of it, but I believe it is the correct five. That is, the brothers did not believe, John 7, then I Cor. 15:7, after Christ's resurrection He appeared to them, at least to James, and James says, "I am convinced." Therefore he was found in Acts chapter 1 in the Upper

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Room with Mary and the rest. It was that believing James and that believing Judas that the Lord chose to write the book of James and the book of Jude.

Review, verse 1: "Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ."

We are dealing with Jude, the half-brother of our Lord, according to Matthew 13:55 and 56. We know that he was not an apostle. In verse 17 of Jude, he seems to separate himself from the apostles, for he says, "But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles [not by us apostles, but by the apostles].

There are one or two deductions we can make. Turn to I Corinthians 9. The Apostle Paul in this chapter is showing again to the Corinthians why he is an apostle and that he is entitled to the rights of an apostle.

Beginning at verse 1: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord [there he is referring to his experience on the Damascus Road]? Are you not my work in the Lord? [In other words, the Apostle Paul had begun the church in Corinth.] If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we not have a right to eat and drink [that is, at church expense]? [In other words, since I am an apostle and I am working for you, I should have that right, but he didn't take that right of course.] Verse 5] Do we have no right to take along a sister, a wife, as do also the other apostles and the brothers of our Lord and Cephas [that is, Peter]? "

Notice, there Paul is saying the brothers of our Lord were married, they had wives. "Do we not have a right that is, to travel along with a sister or wife, as the brothers of the Lord?" So Jude was a married man. We have further confirmation of that out of Church history. I want to read an excerpt taken from Eusebius Hist. Eccl. lib iii cc 19, 20 (Horne's Intro. Vol 2, pg. 377 note 2):

Eusebius relates on the authority of Hegesippus, a converted Jew who flourished in the second century, that the emperor Domitian, in a fit of jealousy, ordered inquiry to be made concerning the posterity of David [if you remember your church history, there were ten Roman imperial persecutions, which began in the first century and continued to the time of Charlemagne. Domitian, was a Roman emperor from 81 to 96] on which occasion some of the grandchildren of Jude were brought before him. [In other words, he was not only married but he had grandchildren.]

The emperor, first asking them several questions respecting their profession and manner of life, which was husbandry, next inquired

concerning the kingdom of Christ, and when it should appear. To this they replied that it was a heavenly and spiritual one, not a temporal kingdom; and that it would not be manifested till the end of the World. Domitian, thus finding that they were mean [humble and lacking distinction] persons and perfectly harmless, dismissed them unbound, and by edict appeased the persecution which had been raised against the Church. Hegesippus also adds that on their release the grandchildren of Jude afterwards presided over churches, both as being martyrs [more correctly confessors] and also as being allied to our Lord.

Paul in I Corinthians 9 points out that Jude no doubt was married, and Church history confirms that fact. So we have a man who is writing here out of a background of understanding people, who begins his letter by saying, "Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ."

Q. I don't understand the name "Domitian." I've never heard it.

A. That is a name. I mentioned that in the early Church history there were ten Roman imperial persecutors, folks that persecuted the Church, and Domitian was one of those imperial persecutors. That was his name.

Q. What do you mean by half-brother?

A. You remember that our Lord was virgin born. That is, Joseph was Christ's legal father but not His physical father. Christ had a physical mother but He did not have a physical father. After Christ was born, Joseph and Mary had other children. Matthew 13, verses 55 and 56, name those children that were born to Joseph and Mary. They had the same mother but not the same father. Therefore, they are technically half-brothers.

In verse 1 Jude identifies himself as brother of James. In our last class the question was asked, "Who was this James?" And we didn't have time to go into the matter. There are four persons in the New Testament who are called James. James, the son of Zebedee, the brother of the Apostle John. Then there is James the son of Alphaeus called James the Less. He was one of the twelve apostles. So we have two apostles who are called James. Then there is James, the Lord's half-brother, named in Matthew 13:55,56. It is this James to whom Jude refers in Jude 1. He was the full brother of James, the half-brother of Christ. There was another James who is mentioned briefly as the father of the Apostle Judas, not Iscariot. So there are four James in the New Testament.

In Acts chapter 12 you will find that James, the brother of John, was martyred by Herod. He became the first Christian apostle to be martyred. The James who is the brother of Jude became the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. He is mentioned in Acts 15 as the head of the Church at the time of the Jerusalem Council. He lived until around 62 A.D. when the high priest martyred him as well.

To repeat. There is James, the brother of John, there is another apostle James who is the son of Alphaeus, there is James the half-brother of our Lord, the full brother of Jude, and then there is James, the father of the apostle Judas, not Iscariot. Those four.

In Jerusalem when you enter through the western wall, through the Joppa gate, and immediately turn to the right, you find a road that leads eventually at the present time to the Wailing Wall. Immediately after you turn right, you come to a set of steps that leads to a platform that goes into what is called the Citadel of David. It was on that platform that Allenby, the British general, received the keys to the city at the end of World War I. You go just a little further and find an opening. You step inside and there is nothing but a level field. They've been doing some archaeological digging, but there is nothing in the field, unless they have built it recently. That was the location of Herod's palace at the time of Christ. Instead of turning and going into Herod's field, you follow the road and go under an arch, and immediately to the left there is an Armenian church called the Church of St. James. This church is dedicated to James, the brother of John, who was martyred, and to James, the half-brother of our Lord, who was martyred later.

The Apostle James was decapitated, at least according to tradition, and they claim they have his head entombed there in the church. James, the brother of Jude, is also said to be buried in that church. I don't know whether either can be proven. There are other items of interest. You remember, when Joshua crossed the Jordan River, they took twelve stones and put them in the river. It is claimed that one of those stones is in this church and can be seen. They have a stone in the base of an altar. They also have a stone that came from Mt. Sinai. It is hard to know what to believe when you visit some of these places, but remember what they say should suggest to you the truth that is involved in scripture.

The latter part of verse 1 says, "to those who are called, sanctified by God and perserved [or kept] by Jesus Christ." There are words there about which we could have a lot of discussion and perhaps some good argument -- the word "called," the word "sanctified," and the word "kept" [or "preserved"]. I want to express my own lefthanded opinion concerning those.

The first is the word "called" -- "to those who are called." There is a difference in Christian doctrine here. There are some who say there are two callings in Scripture. One is that God gives a general call to all people everywhere. Then He gives a specific call to those who are supposed to be saved. If you receive a general call, that is not effective. It is the specific call that brings you to Christ.

While I have friends who believe that, I personally do not find that though in Scripture. I think there is one call that goes out to all men everywhere. "God commands all men everywhere to repent." "Who-

soever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." And I have trouble in my own mind envisioning someone who did not come to Christ, and when he stands before the judgment bar of God and God says to him, "You did not respond to the call," and that unsaved persons says, "I did not receive a special call. Therefore, I am punished eternally because You didn't call me specially." That isn't the God I know. I believe that John 1 says "this is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," that places into every human heart sufficient understanding of his need of salvation, that he makes the choice to respond to the call and the command that goes out from God to come and "take of the water of life freely."

Illustration: There is a captain of a ship and his men mutiny against him and knock him into unconsciousness. There is a second ship that pulls alongside, and the captain of the second ship sees there is trouble so he boards the first ship, revives the first captain to consciousness and then says, "Do you want me to help put down this rebellion on your ship?" The first captain has the choice to make that he will take the help that is offered or reject it.

Every person who is born into the world is dead in trespasses and sins. He can make no move, he is separated from God because of sin. But then the Holy Spirit comes. Again, John chapter 1: "This is the light that lighteth every man what cometh into the world." I believe that the Holy Spirit enlightens that darkened conscience sufficiently to respond to the command that all men are to repent -- to respond to the invitation, "Come unto Me and drink," "whosoever will, let him come." That person whose conscience has been revived sufficiently is then responsible to either accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to receive Christ or to reject it. So that when men stand before the judgment bar of God and are sent into eternal darkness, it is not because God has not called them, but because they have refused the enablement that God gave to receive Christ as Saviour.

[Comment: I'm disappointed that the class is only a half hour.

Reply: I'll tell you why we do that. Some folks are here for the half hour before and this half hour as well. I had a teacher one time who said, "The mind can't take any more than the seat can." Or, "If you don't strike oil in twenty minutes, quit boring." So we try to keep it to a half hour, and there's a prayer meeting at 9:45 as well. But I like it that way, better than to have you so bored and tired that you wouldn't come back.]

Jude 1:1: "Jude, a bond servant of Jesus Christ, the brother of James," and the latter half of verse 1, "to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ."

The last time we met I pointed out that there are three words in the latter half of that verse about which there are differences of opin-

ion but which are important as far as our Christian experience is concerned. We dealt a little with the word "called," and I expressed the opinion that there is a call that goes out from God in which He commands "all men everywhere to repent," He invites "whosoever will may come" to the Lord for salvation, and this is the call to which Jude refers here. I trust that you have answered that call to come to Christ.

There are two other words there. One is "sanctified," and the other is "preserved." I will take a little time on those today. You may have a Bible which, instead of reading "sanctified," reads "loved" or "beloved." That different reading results from the use of different manuscripts. We won't go into that this morning, but simply to say that the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus use the word "sanctified," and it is "sanctified" that I want to talk about today.

There are some wide differences of opinion concerning sanctification. I will not go into all the view but simply express my own opinion concerning sanctification in the Word of God.

The word "sanctified," both in the Old Testament in the Hebrew and in the New Testament in Greek has basically the idea of to be set apart -- to be set apart for, or set apart from. It is used of things about which there is no moral question at all. For instance, instruments, vessels that were used in the temple were sanctified. The vessels themselves could do no right or wrong. It is simply that they were set apart for temple use. Or, what is amazing, if we turn to the Hebrew in the Old Testament, we find that the word "harlot" comes from the word which means "to sanctify." What does that say to us? It simply meant that she set her body apart for a use, one of course with which we would not agree.

When we come to the Christian use of the word "sanctified," in which we are dealing with being set apart for God, we have a new connotation. There is a holiness which is implied and involved. There are three forms of sanctification in the New Testament which apply to you and to me as believers. I want to trace those briefly.

Hebrews 10 -- you will need to pay attention to the tenses of the verbs. If you are using a King James Bible or some other ones, you may not get this sense out of it. Hebrews 10:9: "Then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God,' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified [past tense] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

If you have believed in the Lord as your personal Saviour, you have been [past tense] sanctified. You have been set apart for Him for His use. We call that positional sanctification. We may not feel very sanctified, but we are. We have been set apart by the Lord morally. How has that been done? In the last part of verse 10, "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." The sacri-

face of Christ on the cross has made available to all who will believe a work of sanctification. So the time you knelt and received Christ as your Saviour, among the many things that Christ did at that moment is that He sanctified you. "You have been [past tense] sanctified."

Then in verse 14, watch the tense here: "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" [present tense]. However it is in your Bible, it needs to be understood in that light. The first was a positional sanctification, but this is now an experiential one. You and I are in the process of being sanctified. How is that accomplished? John 17:17, our Lord prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy word; Thy word is truth." So, the Bible has a very important part in your and my present day sanctification. We are to be continually set apart from the things of the world unto the things of the world. We ought to be on a steady upward path.

I confess to you that mine doesn't work quite that way. It seems that I go up and then down a little bit, something comes into my life that needs to be moved aside in order that I might follow the path of holiness. But we are presently being sanctified by the Word. That's why it is so important to have our personal devotions every day. We should read quite a bit of the Scriptures and pray about what we read.

Someone says, "Well, I don't understand all that I read," or as someone said to me the other day, "I don't remember what I read." I had to agree that I find myself in the same boat, and it leaks a little bit. Nevertheless, that Word in a very remarkable sort of way acts to sanctify us in the present time.

Have you heard the story of a lady in a rather backward country -- I'll not name the country -- who had to go to the river every day to get some water and bring it back? All she had was a basket. So she would go to the river and get some water in the basket, and as she came back that water would leak out of the basket, so that she had very little left when she returned to her home. Someone mentioned that to her. She said, "Yes, I know. But at least I have a clean basket." Did I say that clearly?

You and I may read the Word of God, we may not understand some of the things we read, and much of it we may not remember tomorrow. And yet somehow the coursing of the Scriptures through us, through our minds, through our eyes, cleanses us, and present sanctification goes on. Then there is a blessing for what we do remember and what we can obey as we move from day to day, the Lord willing, on to higher ground.

There is a third phase of this sanctification. Turn to I Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 23: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." I know that some translations read "until the coming," and that is all

right. I think you get the same sense, but it is a preposition which is better understood as "at." That verse is saying, "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So this process of sanctification which has gone on in our lives -- we have been set aside for Him, we are constantly being sanctified for Him, we'll be completed when He comes. Remember what it says in I John, "We shall see Him and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Those things in our lives which deter us from following the Lord perfectly, which sometimes control our desires or our thoughts or our acts will all be removed, when? At the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. So there is encouragement ahead, that God, who has begun a good work in us will perfect it in that day of redemption.

So, we have a threefold work of sanctification going on for the believer. When he believes, he is sanctified positionally in the Lord. As he goes from day to day there is the process of present sanctification. And suddenly at the coming of the Lord, our state will reach our standing, our position, and we will be completely sanctified in Him.

Let's keep working on it. That is our job today. God has already set us apart, we are to be setting ourselves apart, and He will finish the job when the Lord comes back.

Back to Jude, verse 1. The latter part of the verse says, "preserved [or kept] by Jesus Christ." Here again there are differences of opinion concerning our salvation as to whether we keep it or not. I say this kindly, but there are folks who believe you can be saved and then lost and then saved again. I personally think that is completely contrary to the Scriptures. This verse does not say, "those who persevere," in other words, you hold on until you've got it finally made. It says "preserved" in or by Christ Jesus. It is His job.

I jotted down a couple of familiar verses: I Peter 1:5, "kept by the power of God"; Ephesians 4:30, "sealed [that is, by the Holy Spirit] for the day of redemption"; John 10:28, 29: "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." If you look at that verse in your Greek testament, you find that that negative is repeated -- "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never, never perish." That sounds pretty strong to me. That's preservation.

Then in the Romans passage which is so familiar to us: "For I am persuaded that neither life nor death nor angels nor principalities, nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." You could name a number of things that might possibly do it, but Paul throws in the

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lawyer's clause, "no other created thing." You can't even take yourself out of the loving hand of God.

Prayer: And now, our Father, we thank You for the book of Jude and what little we know about it, that he was faithful in serving his brother, but more than that, his Saviour, and that he addresses us as those who were called and have responded to that call. We pray that by Your grace, as we meet from time to time we shall rejoice anew and again and afresh and evermore in a loving Saviour, who keeps and satisfies. For we ask it in His precious name. Amen.